

Peer Support Specialist Times

"Recovery and healing happen in relationship." - PSL for the 21st Century

Independence Born Out of Interdependence

By Chris W. Martin



On the 4th of July, **we celebrate Independence Day** which commemorates 13 unique colonies signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Did you know that what brought about our Independence Day is similar to what happens in recovery and resilience services? **It takes a collaboration of diverse people coming together to support a miraculous and united outcome.**

One of the founding fathers and the third president of the United States, John Adams, noted this team-like synergy in his 1818 letter to Hezekiah Niles, editor of the Baltimore-based national weekly news magazine, Weekly Register when he wrote:

*"The Colonies had grown up under Constitutions of Government, So different, there was so great a Variety of Religions, they were composed of So many different Nations, their Customs, Manners and Habits had So little resemblance, and their Intercourse had been so rare and their Knowledge of each other So imperfect, that to unite them in the Same Principles in Theory and the Same System of Action was certainly a very difficult Enterprize. The compleat Accomplishment of it, in So Short a time and by Such Simple means, was perhaps a Singular Example in the History of Mankind. Thirteen Clocks were made to Strike together; a perfection of Mechanism which no Artist had ever before effected."*¹

As that other great 20th Century founder and imagineer, Walt Disney, said, **"Many hands and hearts and minds generally contribute to anyone's notable achievements."** So to all the recovery and resilience service teams out there, Happy Independence and Interdependence Day!

1. Retrieved from <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-6854> on June 27, 2024.

Inside

Page 2

Keeping the Bridge Warm
- Michael Zeeb

Page 3

CRRS Update
- Jim Ritchie



Contact us:

Phone: 209.313.4511

Email: crrs-emails@cbhi.net



Like many people in the recovery community, I believe that **anyone who chooses to do the work of recovery can recover**. I didn't always have such a strong belief in recovery because there was a time I doubted I could recover, but I have learned it through relationship and experience.

I obtained my first job in behavioral health at a treatment center for adolescents transitioning out of a juvenile detention center. I cried the whole drive home during my first 6 months. That was before I realized that kids who have been hurt by adults sometimes pre-emptively lash out at adults because they fear they're going to leave anyway. After those first 6 months, I gradually developed trusting relationships with each of the 16 kids. I stayed for 7 more years and grew so much.

Next, I served as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at a clinic serving adults with serious mental health challenges. The first person I met there was Darren (not his real name). For my first week, he would meet me at the door of my office in the morning, scream at me for 5 minutes, and then leave. His case manager told me that the previous VR Counselor had let him down. Over time, Darren started meeting with me. When he saw that I came to our appointments regularly and delivered on my agreements to help him get eyeglasses and work clothes, the harsh words and tone began to fade. We cultivated a very positive working relationship. **He attended Peer Support Training and was hired as one of the first Peer Support Specialists at a local recovery center.**

Gregory (not his real name) was another person referred to me for VR services. He had long white hair and a long white beard. For several weeks, he would sit down in my office and say very little except a mumbling version of "I want cigarettes." One of the staff at the clinic said, "Gregory's really not there. He won't be able to work." But after a few more short meetings, Gregory began to talk a little bit. He shared that he wanted a part-time job so he could buy a rod and reel to go fishing in the canal by his assisted living center. I arranged for us to tour a program where he could work part-time in an assembly line. He kept not showing up to meet me for the tour. One day he brought his case manager to my office. She said, "Gregory asked me to share something with you. He told me he feels embarrassed because he needs adult undergarments to go to work but he has no money for them." I responded with respect and asked if he would like Vocational Rehabilitation to provide him with funds for these garments. He nodded and his eyes teared up. **I felt very grateful for his trust, and Gregory eventually started at the work program.**

I share these stories not to imply any simplistic message about patience and trust. I know the trust-building process is far more complex than that. I wanted to share these stories to convey my faith in accepting people where they are at, believing they are capable of trust, growth, and positive change even if they initially come across as "too angry" or "not highly verbal" or any of the other labels that get put on people who don't initially seem easy to engage.

Summer Wellness & Recovery Resilience Updates

Summer is more than a season—it's an opportunity to refresh your mind and spirit. Whether it's enjoying a walk in the sunshine, sharing laughter with friends, or taking a few moments to unplug, the small joys of summer can make a big difference in supporting mental wellness. This season, make time to recharge, reconnect, and remember that caring for your mental health is just as important as caring for your physical health.

As we embrace the spirit of renewal that summer brings, the Crestwood Recovery Resilience Solutions Team continues to invest in building a strong, recovery-oriented workforce that supports individuals on their journey toward wellness. We are excited to share a few highlights from the second quarter:

- **Over 110 Peer Support Specialists were trained**, strengthening the workforce with individuals who bring the invaluable perspective of lived experience.
- **More than 200 supervisors and behavioral health staff participated in training** focused on Recovery Practices and Principles, helping organizations foster recovery-oriented cultures and services.

- **Recovery Practices and Principles emphasize the integration of Peer Support Services delivered by well-trained Peer Support Specialists.** These services are grounded in the unique strengths of lived experience, empathy, empowerment, hope, and mutuality. Our training curricula are intentionally designed around these foundational recovery values to ensure consistency and excellence across all learning opportunities.

Continue Your Professional Growth

Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (CMPSS) are invited to join our monthly, no-cost, two-hour Advanced Recovery Practices training. These interactive sessions provide Continuing Education (CE) credits and offer opportunities to deepen recovery-oriented skills while connecting with fellow professionals.

To receive CE credit, participants must:

- Pre-register for the training session.
- Attend with cameras on.
- Be fully engaged and actively participate throughout the two-hour training.

Continuing education plays a vital role in the ongoing development of Peer Support Specialists. As behavioral health practices continue to evolve, lifelong learning helps Peer Support Specialists strengthen their skills, stay current with best practices, enhance the quality of support they provide, and continue promoting hope, recovery, and resilience for the individuals and communities they serve.

Thank you for your continued dedication to advancing recovery-oriented services. Together, we are building stronger systems of care and creating opportunities for healing, growth, and resilience every day.

We wish you a safe, healthy, and restorative summer!

- Jim Ritchie, CRRS Director of Operations

Viva La Evolution!

A podcast on Growth, Resilience, and Transformation



Join The
Conversation!

